

# Michigan Celebrates AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH with Literature

## WEEK 4

### February 2021

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

The Michigan Department of Education and the Library of Michigan are excited to showcase African American authors and their literary works each week during the month of February in celebration of African American History Month. Seven authors and their works are featured and were selected from nominations submitted by educators for use by educators.

Student literacy increases powerfully as students see themselves (mirrors) and others (windows) portrayed accurately in their reading as presented in the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop. By raising the consciousness about great African American authors from educators to educators and by lifting up African American authors and their works, we seek to create conditions for greater engagement with literature among Michigan students.

February  
**22**

### Each Kindness

Jacqueline Woodson

**Age:** 0-8 years

**Genre:** Fiction

**ISBN:** 978-0399246524

**Awards:** ALA Notable  
Children's Books - Middle  
Readers Category: 2015

Coretta Scott King Award  
(Authors)

National Book Awards:  
Young People's Literature

**Nominator:** Ed Spicer

**School/District/Institution:**  
(Formerly) North Ward  
Elementary/Allegan Public  
Schools

### Incorporation in Curriculum:

"I adore this book due to its unexpected outcome. I use this book as a mentor text for personal narrative writing with my third graders. Many books are used for immersion to narrative writing but few stand out and stick with the students like this book. The main character is mean to a new girl and refuses to befriend her and almost stops her from having other friends in her new school. At the end of the story the mean girl cannot think of any kind thing she has done to add to the class discussion and she is never able to make things right with the new girl because she leaves! It really impacts my students and leads to discussion of how important it is to try to always be kind. As for being a mentor text, we use it to delve into the heart of the message and talk about how sometimes there isn't a happy ending."

February  
**23**

### **Freedom in Congo Square**

Carole Boston Weatherford

**Age:** 0-8 years

**Genre:** Nonfiction

**ISBN:** 978-1499801033

**Awards:** ALA Notable Children's Books - All Ages Category: 2017

Booklist Editors' Choice - Books for Youth - Young Readers Category: 2016

School Library Journal Best Nonfiction Books: 2016

**Nominator:** Shari Apol

**School/District/Institution:** Lansing School District

#### **Incorporation in Curriculum:**

"I think this book helps young children learn not only about slavery but also about how the slaves valued freedom and celebrated their connectedness and musical culture in an actual place – Congo Square, Louisiana."

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### **The Hate U Give**

Angie Thomas

**Age:** Teen

**Genre:** Fiction

**ISBN:** 978-0062498533

**Awards:** Booklist Editors' Choice - Books for Youth - Older Readers Category: 2017

School Library Journal Best Books: 2017

YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2018

**Nominator:** Staci Vought

**School/District/Institution:** Troy Athens High School/Troy School District

#### **Incorporation in Curriculum:**

"This book helped make Black Lives Matter and racial discontent with the police force accessible to high school students. It also helped students either see themselves within an African American main character or empathize with an African American main character. I have recommended this book to ALL types of readers and have always gotten impactful feedback."

February  
**25**

### **Ghost**

Jason Reynolds

**Age:** 9-12 years

**Genre:** Fiction

**ISBN:** 978-1481450164

**Awards:** National Book Award Finalist

School Library Journal Best Books: 2016

YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2017

**Nominator:** Tammi Kantola

**School/District/Institution:** Ravenna Middle School/Ravenna Public Schools

#### **Incorporation in Curriculum:**

"This text has the ability to invite reluctant readers through the door of loving literature. I have featured Jason Reynolds on the Author of the Month board and used this book for First Chapter Friday."

February

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**A Raisin in the Sun**

Lorraine Hansberry

**Age:** Teen

**Genre:** Fiction/Drama

**ISBN:** 978-0679755333

**Awards:** 1960 Tony Award®  
Nominee for Best Play -  
written by Lorraine Hansberry;  
produced by Philip Rose,  
David J. Cogan

**Nominator:** Chi-Tuyen Richmond

**School/District/Institution:** Ypsilanti Community  
Middle School/Ypsilanti Community Schools

**Incorporation in Curriculum:**

"I use this literary work to explore diverse themes  
such as: assimilation, gentrification, White flight,  
racism, colorism, classism, as well as feminism,  
to help students understand the link between  
Black urban culture and poverty in America."

February

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**Revolutionary Girls**

Torie J. Anderson

**Age:** Teen

**Genre:** Non-fiction

**ISBN:** 1645431835

**Nominator:** Porsche Lee

**School/District/Institution:** University  
Prep Academy Elementary School/Mark  
Murray Campus

**Incorporation in Curriculum:**

"I used this book to show students that they  
have a voice to speak out and become  
social activists."

February

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**The Bluest Eye**

Toni Morrison

**Age:** Teen

**Genre:** Fiction

**ISBN:** 978-0307278449

**Awards:** Toni Morrison was  
recognized for her contributions  
to literature when she received  
the Nobel Prize in Literature  
in 1993, more than 20 years  
following the original publication  
of *The Bluest Eye*.

Must-read Classics (Teens)

**Nominator:** Deanna Holman

**School/District/Institution:** Educational  
Services Center/Muskegon Area ISD

**Incorporation in Curriculum:**

"I used this novel with high school seniors in a  
unit of African American Literature Study."

Thank you to all the Michigan Pre-K-12 educators who nominated African American authors and their literary works as well as how they used them with their students. The 28 titles and authors showcased during the month of February provide only a snapshot of the volume of literary works by an expansive number of outstanding African American authors. To find more books featuring African American authors visit the MDE website and click on [Authors of Color List](#), and visit your school or local public library.